

Brian St. Onge
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Members of the Board and Chairperson,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my written testimony in support of General Assembly Raised Bill #5389, the act concerning the palliative use of Marijuana.

I would like to begin with a brief summary of my medical history. Many years ago I was diagnosed with the following conditions: severe manic depression, bi-polar tendencies, social and general anxiety disorder (also labeled severe). These conditions I consider to be debilitating and without question, affect my daily life. I have been prescribed numerous combinations of drugs, some more successful than others, all of which had horrible side-effects. Side-effects including but not limited to, abnormal weight gain, insomnia, uncontrollable muscle twitches (which I was told these can become permanent), loss of interest in sex with my wife and adult acne.

With all that being said, the options available to me are very limited. Under current law, I am forced to use multiple pharmaceutical poisons to be able to partially alleviate some of the symptoms associated with my medical conditions. Even on a good day, the side effects outweigh the medicinal benefits of these multiple prescription medications.

I believe I would personally benefit from the use of medicinal cannabis, as would many others in the state of Connecticut. I truly believe that the people of Connecticut would not be harmed if there was an additional, natural and holistic alternative to pharmaceutical poisons with horrible side effects. I believe everyone should have the right to freely decide which medication they would like to use. If we were given this choice, many of us would be able to regain our lives lost to debilitating prescription side effects.

There are many in Connecticut, including myself, who are forced to live in fear of criminal prosecution and reprisal due to the fact that we choose to medicate with cannabis, rather than pharmaceutical poisons. Not only criminal prosecution, many of us are faced with the fear of our children being removed by the state and discrimination by employers, landlords and even some uneducated family members. Hopefully with the passage of this Bill, many of us in Connecticut would no longer feel the need to hide.

In my opinion, Bill #5389 would greatly serve to benefit the residents of Connecticut. My only concern is regarding, Section 1 Part 2, the definition of a "debilitating medical condition". As the Bill is currently written, people with similar medical conditions to my own would not be able to legally use medicinal cannabis. I believe it would immensely improve Bill #5389 to amend the language from an arbitrary list of "debilitating" conditions to allowing doctors to decide on a patient by patient basis who they believe would benefit from medical cannabis. My personal doctor supports my choice to medicate with cannabis and would like to see me be able to do so legally, as I am sure many other doctors in the state feel the same way.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding Raised Bill #5389 (An act concerning the palliative use of marijuana). I hope you will vote in support of this Bill.

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